

UGA College of Agriculture Dedicates New Livestock Farm

By Jennifer Whittaker

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The University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) held a dedication ceremony Sept. 21 for Double Bridges Farm, its new livestock teaching and research farm. Located partially in Clarke and predominantly in Oglethorpe County off of U.S. Highway 78, the farm will replace the college's former beef, sheep and swine teaching and research facilities



located on South Milledge Avenue in Athens.

The 237-acre farm is expected to be in full operation by next spring, according to Dr. Keith Bertrand, head of the CAES Animal and Dairy Science head, a flock of 30 sheep and a farrow-to-finish swine facility that will initially house 60 sows but is likely to grow to a capacity of 100 sows in

the next year.

"Our students are lucky. We now have a great facility to do the things we need to do to teach and do research," Bertrand told those attending the dedication ceremony.

Farm structures include a classroom building, a hay and equipment storage shed, a sheep pavilion and a shed and corral for working cattle. The swine facility includes six hog barns, an office building that houses the computer which runs the facility's automated feeding system, a feed barn and a building that houses equipment which will run the facility's waste management system.

"Our teaching and research has been somewhat limited by the old facilities on Milledge," said CAES Dean Dr. Scott Angle. "This [facility] is going to help propel the college to the next level of success."

The CAES has 261 undergraduate and 37 graduate students in its ADS program, Bertrand said.

"Having the beef, sheep and swine facilities located in one area will make it easier for students to participate in labs and workshops," said Ali Terrell, a

CAES student and president of Block and Bridle, a student livestock club.

State legislators appropriated about \$5 million in 2006 to build the facility and the college began the process of building the farm in 2007. The milking parlor at the existing CAES dairy facility located across the highway from Double Bridges Farm was also renovated.

The CAES hopes waste management practices that are being used at the swine facility will help improve the image of agriculture. A 17,000-gallon methane digester will separate the methane from the hog waste and prevent it from entering the air to reduce the odor of the hog manure. Then, the waste slurry will be stored in a tank and applied as fertilizer to the farm's pastures when needed. The methane that is removed will be used to heat water to create steam to power the digester. Propane will power the digester if the manure doesn't produce enough methane.

For more pictures, check out Georgia Farm Bureau's Facebook page!

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/album.php?aid=261230&id=133979276345>



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